

down the parameters for a regional conference, get a U.N. Security Council resolution passed calling for a regional conference on Iraq and nonintervention. And then do what I have been calling for for 2 years, set up a contact group made up of the regional and world powers who will essentially police the deal—not send troops into Iraq, police the deal—so that all those who sign on in the region do not interfere and observe they are not interfering.

The fifth piece of my plan calls for a date to be announced, that by the end of 2008, the majority of American forces will be redeployed. There are two reasons for that. To give the U.S. military certainty, to give them certainty to plan, for there is no possibility of them pulling American forces out in 6 months or 8 months. I am not going to presume to tell the military how long an orderly change in our presence in Iraq would take and when it should take place. If it occurs sooner, all the better.

But the second reason to state it is to let the Iraqis know, as Democrats and Republicans and the President himself have acknowledged, that as long as they think we are there forever, they are not about to step up to the ball to make the hard decisions.

So I believe the only reasonable prospect of holding Iraq together, to avoid partitioning, which could be a disaster, is to give the region breathing room and incentive to stay in the deal.

I hope over time this will get a closer look. As Dr. Kissinger said, and I spoke with him and Vice President CHENEY in Philadelphia at the World Affairs Council, when they asked Dr. Kissinger, after my speech along these lines, what he thought, he said he thought the plan warranted very close scrutiny. When I laid it out to Ash Carter, he thought the plan was a good plan. When I laid it out to other people, including former Republican and Democratic members of the foreign policy establishment, it went from: Joe, is this partitioning? and once explained that it wasn't, to not a bad idea, to fully embracing the idea.

This is going to take a while. I remember when I came to this floor in the early 1990s and to the shock and dismay of my colleagues called for us lifting the arms embargo against the Bosnians and calling for air strikes against the Serbs. My colleagues thought that was crazy.

I remember when I came back again, after meeting with Milosevic and him having told people in a private meeting that when he asked me what I thought about him, I told him I thought he was a war criminal and I would spend my career seeing that he was tried as one, my colleagues thought it didn't make sense. It took 3 years to convince the administration we should move. It takes time. But they did move. We didn't lose an American force. We stopped a genocide. We stopped the dismantling of an entire region of the world, and we saved the lives of at least a quarter of a million people.

We can do that again. Don't expect everyone to embrace this plan. I realize it is strategically pretty broad. I realize it takes time to digest. My fervent prayer is, I would love it if 6 months from now, what I proposed proves not to be necessary because the Iraqis have embraced and rallied around this new government, that the insurgency is stopped, that we have not had continued ethnic cleansing, and that there is a unified central government as is. I would be delighted, delighted to stand on the floor and have people say: Told you, Joe. You didn't need the scheme you laid out.

I pray God that is true. But I respectfully suggest to you it is not likely to be true. We better have a plan B for pulling out American troops precipitously without a plan, for keeping them in without a plan is a disaster either way you look at it.

Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the speech I delivered earlier this week at the World Affairs Council be printed in the RECORD.

#### THE WAY FORWARD IN IRAQ: AVOIDING PARTITION, PRESERVING UNITY, PROTECTING AMERICA'S INTERESTS

It's an honor to be back at the Philadelphia World Affairs Council.

First, let me apologize to those of you confused by the schedule. It shows me speaking this afternoon. Instead, you get me to start your day. Look at it this way: things can only get better. And they will, because I understand that Vice President Cheney and Secretary Kissinger will be here for lunch.

I'd like to focus on an issue that weighs heavily on our national consciousness—Iraq. I start from this hard truth: President Bush does not have a strategy for victory in Iraq. His strategy is to prevent defeat and to hand the problem off to his successor. Meanwhile, the frustration of Americans is mounting so fast that Congress might end up mandating a rapid withdrawal, even at the risk of trading a dictator for chaos, and a civil war that could become a regional war.

Both are bad alternatives.

Today, I will argue for a third way that can bring our troops home, protect our fundamental security interests, and preserve Iraq as a unified country.

I developed this plan with Les Gelb, the president emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations. It recognizes this new, central reality in Iraq: a rising tide of sectarian violence is the biggest threat to Iraq's future and to America's interests. It is premised on the proposition that the only way to hold Iraq together, and to create the conditions for our troops to responsibly withdraw, is to give Shiites, Sunnis, and Kurds room to breathe in their own regions.

Let me tell you what our plan is not: it is not partition. Let me tell you what our plan is: It is consistent with Iraq's constitution. It is consistent with the new unity government. And it is consistent with—in fact, it is necessary to—the goal of keeping Iraq unified within its existing borders and not a threat to its own people, its neighbors, or to us.

I'd like to share the details of our plan with you.

#### THE CURRENT SITUATION

I was last in Baghdad on December 15th to observe the elections. It was my sixth trip to Iraq. It was incredibly moving to see Iraqis go to the polls.

I came back with a finger stained purple from the polling ink. But I also returned

with this warning: we must not, yet again, prematurely declare, "Mission Accomplished." Yes, Iraqis voted by the millions, but who did they vote for? Ninety percent cast their ballots for sectarian and ethnic parties. Far from a democratic turning point, the elections reflected Iraq's deepening fault-lines.

Here's where we are in Iraq: we can't lose on the battlefield and the insurgents can't win as long as enough U.S. troops remain. But, as both our Ambassador and our top general in Iraq acknowledge, violence between the Shi'a and Sunnis has surpassed the insurgency as the main security threat. It is driving the country toward chaos and civil war.

Simply put, the sectarian genie is out of the bottle. Ethnic militias increasingly are the law in large parts of Iraq. They have infiltrated the official security forces. Sectarian cleansing has begun in mixed areas, with tens of thousands of Iraqis fleeing their homes in recent weeks. Dozens of dead bodies turn up daily in Baghdad.

Meanwhile, Iraqis have less electricity, clean water, sewage treatment and oil than before the war. Iraq's government ministries are barely functional. Iraq looks more like a failing state, not an emerging democracy.

There is no purely military answer to this slow but certain downward spiral. With more troops and the right strategy, we might have stopped the insurgency. But no number of U.S. troops will stop a civil war. To prevent it, we need a political solution. The national unity government in which the President has put so much stock is necessary, but it is not enough. We have had "unity" governments for three years in Iraq. Yet sectarian violence has escalated.

What the Iraqis need now—and what this plan proposes—is a genuine political way forward that, like our own Articles of Confederation, gives Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds the confidence to pursue their interests peacefully in a unified country. In fact, the central government this plan proposes for Iraq would be even stronger than America's first government. With time, we can hope they will come to their own Philadelphia freedom.

At the same time, I believe we can't pull our forces out precipitously, just as we can't keep them in Iraq indefinitely. Withdrawing them too soon would open the door to all out civil war that could turn into a regional war. It also would leave parts of Iraq a haven for terrorists. That would be disastrous for U.S. interests.

What our troops deserve—and what this plan proposes—is a clear target date for redeployment that, coupled with a political settlement, will allow us to leave Iraq with our basic interests intact.

#### A FIVE POINT PLAN FOR IRAQ

Ten years ago, Bosnia was drowning in ethnic cleansing and facing its demise as a unified state. After much hesitation, the United States stepped in decisively with the Dayton Accords to keep the country whole by dividing it into ethnic federations. We even allowed Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs to retain separate armies. With the help of U.S. troops and others, Bosnians have lived a decade in peace. Now, they are strengthening their common central government, and disbanding their separate armies.

The Bush Administration, despite its profound strategic misjudgments, has a similar opportunity in Iraq.

The idea is to maintain a unified Iraq by decentralizing it and giving Kurds, Shiites, and Sunnis the room to run their own affairs. The central government would be left in charge of common interests. We would encourage Iraqis to accept this formula with major sweeteners for the Sunnis, a military